



CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY
December 1, 2011
7:00 p.m.
Albany High School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, President
Rose Brandon, Vice President
Sue Adler
Felicia Green
Edith Leet
Alexandra Streznewski
Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Jeff Honeywell
Bill Hogan
Ken Cioffi
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Linda Rudnick

ABSENT: Melissa Mackey

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.
- All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Members of the audience were welcomed and thanked for taking the time to attend the meeting.
- The Mission Statement was read.

Mr. Egan made a motion to amend the agenda to include a resolution under Routine Consent to enter into a contract with Girvin & Ferlazzo for legal services. Mrs. Leet seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

Mr. Egan noted the Board would convene into Executive Session immediately following this meeting in order to discuss particular personnel.

Mr. Egan advised this is the last meeting of the calendar year and the Board will say good-bye to Ms. Melissa Mackey who is leaving the Board, after four years of dedicated service to this District. Mr. Egan stated that anyone who has worked alongside Melissa knows that she is a hard-working professional and her dedication to the children of this City is second to none. She has played a key role in many committees and major decisions the Board has made over the last four years. Unfortunately, Ms. Mackey was unable to attend this meeting. We hope to be able to honor Ms. Mackey in person in the future.

Mr. Honeywell introduced newly elected board member, Sue Adler, and her husband, Alan Adler, who administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Adler. Ms. Adler then expressed her gratitude for the votes that were cast. She takes this responsibility very seriously, and looks forward to serving all the educational needs for all students in the District. Ms. Adler's term runs through December 2013.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Colucciello introduced Mr. Lesko who recognized Gene Cretz, the US Ambassador to Libya. Mr. Cretz graduated from Albany High School in 1968 and was a teacher in the District during 1977-79. Earlier this week Mr. Cretz was recognized as one of the top 100 Global Thinkers for

2011 by the Foreign Policy Magazine. Cretz left Libya in January after the release of diplomatic cables that detailed corruption in the government of now-deposed dictator Muammar al-Qaddafi. The U.S. abandoned its Libyan embassy in February but reopened it in September after Qaddafi forces were driven out of Tripoli. Cretz returned then.

Mr. Lesko then recognized Albany High School junior Philo Germano qualified for the state cross-country championships with an outstanding performance at the Section II meet at Saratoga Spa State Park. He finished 7th among runners from the Capital Region's largest schools, and 12th overall out of 572 runners from all area schools. He is the first member of the Albany High boys' cross-country team to reach states since Erich Strassner qualified in 1995 and '96. Coach Geer, the Boy's Varsity Head Coach at Albany High School introduced Mr. Germano noted this was a great year and he looks forward to next year.

The Boy's Soccer team, led by Coach Dave Weiss, participated in a playoff run that would break the decades-long Suburban Council hold on the Class AA championship. This year is the second time this team has won a Big 10 title championship in the last three years. Coach Weiss introduced the members of the team, Marty Ryan, Austin Valella, Seamus Daniels, Stefano Sainato, Kieran Stark, and Johannes Grunow, a foreign exchange student. Additional team members were Jonathan Hillengast, Brendan Kelly, Lucas-Phayre-Gonzalez, and Tyler Sensi. Mr. Weiss noted the team represents 12 different nationalities on the team, with members coming from South America to South Sudan, the newest country on the planet.

Dr. Colucciello added mention of the 44 students who were inducted into the National Honor Society earlier this week. This is another example of the outstanding people in Albany. There are 8,700 students in this District, these are some of them.

Dr. Kevin Baughman of the Capital Region BOCES gave a brief update on the Superintendent Search process. Dr. Charles Dedrick, Superintendent of BOCES will take the lead in this search which has already started in preliminary conversations with potential candidates. Members of the BOCES team will meet with Board members next week to discuss issues including timeline, salary and benefits, ideal characteristics and background of the candidates, and District strengths that will be captured in a recruitment brochure going out to candidates, the roles of the constituent groups and the scheduling of public meeting in January. In addition an on-line survey will be provided for the public to voice input and lastly the screening and interview process.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Marlon Anderson addressed the Board regarding the relationship between the public schools and charter schools. This detracts from the education of the children in this community. Charter schools and public schools need to be on the same page.
2. Jessie LaPolla, of the Alliance for Quality Education invited the public to attend "First Things First – 2012" a speak-out and demonstration to demand restoration of the \$1.3 billion that was cut from our public schools this year, investment in quality early childhood education and affordable and quality public colleges and universities. Children have lost quality programs and teachers, and college tuition has increased while millionaires are preparing to pocket \$5 billion tax cut on December 31.

3. Vincent Rigosu addressed the Board regarding next year's budget and students prepared to advance to higher grades, and the graduation rate. Mr. Rigosu advised families need to be involved in the education of their children. The District also needs to present a 0% budget to the voters.
4. Carmen Duncan, an MSW intern this year, addressed the Board regarding a town hall meeting on WMHT November 17th, where a student from Albany High School spoke about a classroom that is racially separated and the teacher paid more attention to the white students than the students of color. The student spoke about feeling uneasy going to class under these circumstances. There are also incidents when students of color wearing hats are made to remove them and the white students are not. These situations need to be addressed.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

No report.

INFORMATION

Elementary Education

Ms. Linda Rudnick introduced the topic, noting that principals Mr. Giglio from Delaware Community School, Mr. Fowler from Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology and Ms. Wallace from Albany School of Humanities would be providing the Board with an update on elementary education. This year, each of these three schools is in accountability status for the first time, for student subgroup performance. They are each SINI/one schools for English/Language/Arts. The presentations were focused on leadership efforts to address subgroup performance and to improve overall student achievement results in their building. Each presentation included an overview of the school including grade level configuration, attendance rates, the number of students receiving AIS services, Building Leadership Team involvement in data analysis, instructional support team in the schools, professional development goals, after school programming and volunteer activities in the schools.

- Have you looked at data that show if the cut score was not changed would there have been evidence of progress in the results?

There was evidence of improvement had the cut scores not been changed. The entire test structure is changing and comparison is near impossible.

- What are you doing other than Columbia Writing in the writing curriculum?

Unified writing rubrics by grade level in all schools so all students are aware of what is required to go to the next level. Real time data that breaks things down with the five components of writing, vocabulary, fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics and comprehension is very helpful

- Do you keep records on the after school tutoring and volunteers in terms of what level of students are participating and what kind of progress can be attributed to those activities?

There is a problem with transportation affecting after school programs.

- The District needs to explore level libraries, so that students are provided books at their individual level.

DISCUSSION

Pavilion at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology

Mr. Hogan, along with Artie Flynn, a science teacher at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology, Jane Gottlieb and Mary Beth Farr, parents of students at TOAST, provided the Board of Education with an overview on a project at the school to construct a play pavilion for the students. Depending on cost and codes, the plan is to construct a 24 x 40 ft. structure to be determined by the District and architect. CS Arch has offered to donate architectural services for this project. The TOAST playground and school committee are raising funds and have approximately \$11,000 of the estimated \$20,000 project cost. Funds have been provided by the Standish Family Foundation Grant, Albany Fund for Education Grant and other TOAST fund raising events. Discounts have also been offered from Home Depot and Curtis Lumber. Additional partners in the project are the Albany Booster Club and the Capital District YMCA. This structure will be used for lunchtime recess, science programming, museum studies, YMCA after-school programs, summer school, etc. The structure will be secured and closed to the public. Mr. Hogan advised the expectation is that the Board will be asked to accept donations for this project in January.

Budget Discussion

Dr. Colucciello and Mr. Hogan presented an overview of the upcoming budget planning process for the 2012-2013 school budget to be presented to the public for approval in May. A listing of guidelines for program review were reviewed along with specific program cost/benefit, level of participation, mandated vs. non-mandated, and staffing levels. The 2012-2013 budget will be the fourth consecutive budget developed in the midst of a global financial crisis. There are numerous unknowns at this time. The District will be receiving additional information over the next 4 months that may change assumptions and preliminary estimates. Mr. Hogan reviewed revenue concerns including pension and health care costs and other expense items including charter school costs. The budget process will follow the budget development calendar. Board updates, presentations and budget meetings will be scheduled. In addition, the District will continue to monitor state aid and mandate relief items and continue to seek additional funding and mandate relief. The goal is to present a budget to the public that they can support.

- Consider academic after school programs for struggling schools and insure that they are properly staffed. More information on grant funding, i.e. Academy of Engineering.
- How is the District evaluating sports programs and their success? Are there ways that some functions can be done by volunteers? Consider donations of equipment and supplies. How do grants impact programs?
- Community support would be difficult for a budget that is more than the 2% tax increase. Can the District look at community corporate support for updating technology or sports programs?
- How can we provide longer days for students with transportation issues?
- Class size is increasing. This will need to be looked at.
- The District needs to look at under enrolled schools.
- Programmatic impact needs to be clear to the public.
- No classroom staff cuts
- Preserve Pre-K, possibly consider expansion.

- Consider two resolutions on May 8th, keeping in mind that the rules on contingency budgets have changed considerably. This is a more democratic option. One is the basic budget. The second item would be an enhanced program, possibly technology, summer program, twelve month program. This would allow the public to decide.
- Consider a Development Committee to look at corporate sponsorship.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

Policy #5450.1 Notification of Sex Offender

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented policy #5450.1 Notification of Sex Offender. This policy has been reviewed by the Policy Committee, as well as the District's counsel. Ms. Green made a motion for approval. Mrs. Leet seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Mr. Egan presented to following routine consent items for approval: Proceedings of Meetings (November 3 & November 17, 2011); Appointments (Probationary Appointments, Civil Service, Miscellaneous); Leaves of Absence; Transfers; Retirement, Corrections, Reappointments, Permanent Civil Service; Field Trips; Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000 2011-12; Budget Transfers over \$10,000 2011-2012; Revenue Status Report; Grant Appropriation Status Report 10/31/11; General Fund Reports 10/31/11; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Authorization to Enter Into Contracts; Committee on Pre-School Special Education; Committee on Special Education; Subcommittee on Special Education; Appointments to Special Education Committees. Mr. Egan noted routine consent also includes a resolution to enter into a contract with Girvin & Ferlazzo for legal services. Ms. Streznewski made a motion for approval. Ms. Green seconded the motion.

The Board voted 5 ayes - 0 nays - 1 abstention. Ms. Adler abstained.

Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum Committee met and heard a comprehensive report on Pre-K and Kindergarten. The Committee also received program review reports for elementary and middle school levels. The next meeting is scheduled for 12/20 with a mass program review.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Administration will investigate the comments made earlier during public comment. This practice is unacceptable. The perception of students also needs to be addressed.

Board members were presented several options regarding paperless solution options for Board members. Mr. Cioffi gave three separate options (1) institute the pervious BOE document file system allowing members to access documents from any computer, noting that printing would have to be done from the individual's computer (2) members would be provided a flash drive with report that could then be used on individual computer to view (3) provide laptops that could be used for downloading all files. Members were asked to forward their preferences to Mr. Cioffi.

Adjournment

Mr. Egan thanked everyone for their service this past year. Ms. Streznewski made a motion to adjourn this meeting and convene an executive session for discussion of particular personnel. Ms. Green seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.